

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT
Klamath Falls Motel Mercury - Removal Polrep
Initial and Final Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Region X

Subject: POLREP #1
Initial and Final POLREP
Klamath Falls Motel Mercury
10TF
Klamath Falls, OR
Latitude: 42.2069200 Longitude: -121.7204500

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From: Michael Boykin, On-Scene Coordinator

Date: 12/13/2020

Reporting Period: 12/10/2020 to 12/12/2020

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Site Number:	10TF	Contract Number:	
D.O. Number:		Action Memo Date:	
Response Authority:	CERCLA	Response Type:	Emergency
Response Lead:	EPA	Incident Category:	Removal Action
NPL Status:	Non NPL	Operable Unit:	
Mobilization Date:	12/9/2020	Start Date:	12/10/2020
Demob Date:	12/12/2020	Completion Date:	12/12/2020
CERCLIS ID:	ORN001020577	RCRIS ID:	
ERNS No.:		State Notification:	Oregon DEQ referral
FPN#:		Reimbursable Account #:	

1.1.1 Incident Category

Emergency removal

1.1.2 Site Description

Reportedly, sometime in the early morning of November 21, 2020, a guest in a motel room in Klamath Falls, OR, spilled an unknown amount of elemental mercury from a vial onto the room carpet, contaminated her hand and ingested an unknown amount of mercury. It is unknown who contacted 911 emergency services, but she was transported by Klamath County Fire District 1 EMS (EMS) to the Sky Lakes Medical Center (SLMC) for treatment.

SLMC contacted Oregon Poison Control for guidance on how to be treated. The Oregon Poison Control notified several Oregon State agencies, including the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). DEQ notified the EPA R10 PDO on November 23, 2020 and continued coordinating with the motel owner (PRP) about securing the room and contracting with a clean up company.

The PRP contacted a local environmental clean-up company, who performed an assessment, photographed mercury beads on the carpet, and provided a quote to clean up the room. The PRP did not contract with the clean up company, instead hiring a different company who removed a patch of carpet and bedding, overpacked in a drum and transported it for disposal under manifest on December 4, 2020.

On December 8, 2020, DEQ requested EPA assessment and removal assistance because neither the SLMC nor EMS vehicle had been assessed for potential mercury contamination resulting from transport of the patient, and the PRP did not have any data supporting a clearance decision to return the motel room to public use.

1.1.2.1 Locations

Motel - 5543 South 6th Street, Klamath Falls, OR 97063
Sky Lakes Medical Center - 2865 Daggett Avenue, Klamath Falls, OR 97601
Klamath Fire District 1 Station - 7110 Hilyard Avenue, Klamath Falls, OR 97603

1.1.2.2 Description of Threat

Elemental mercury was released to the carpet and potentially to other surfaces inside and outside of the motel room. A limited cleanup of a section of carpet with mercury beads had been previously performed but no clearance confirmation of surface contamination or ambient air levels was determined.

It was unknown if there was migration of mercury contamination, on the patient's clothing and body, during transport by EMS from the motel to SLMC.

1.1.3 Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results

The EPA and START contractor mobilized to the site on December 9, 2020 to assess the 3 locations and support removal activities. Two Lumex Mercury Vapor Analyzers and one Jerome J505 Mercury Vapor Analyzer were used in the assessment.

The SLMC emergency department room, where the patient was brought in, was assessed and determined to contain no mercury concentrations, above background, in ambient air or on surfaces. The SLMC Emergency Department Director stated that the Emergency Department followed their procedures of cleaning/sterilizing the room after the patient was released. He also indicated that the patient was able to remove her own clothes and medical personnel bagged and disposed of that clothing.

Two EMS vehicles at the Klamath Fire District were assessed and found to not have mercury concentrations above background. The Battalion Chief indicated that both EMS vehicles had been through several cleaning cycles since the day of transport.

The START increased the heater output in the motel room and conducted an assessment for mercury contamination. Ambient air levels were above background but below the 1000 ng/m³ residential action level. Surface measurements of bedding, the remaining carpet and other surfaces in the room discovered levels above 10,000 ng/m³ on the carpet on the perimeter of the carpet segment previously removed.

Based on these findings the OSCs determined that the motel room needed further cleaning and requested the ERRS contractor to mobilize to the site to commence carpet removal and decontamination activities.

2. Current Activities

2.1 Operations Section

2.1.1 Narrative

On December 10, 2020, the ERRS contractor was tasked to mobilize to the motel and to arrive on site the morning of December 11, 2020, weather permitting. The regional weather forecast called for snow showers with the possibility of snow storms and accumulations on the mountain passes.

Based on the December 10 and 11, 2020 assessment findings, all porous surfaces (carpeting, bedding, mattress and box springs, towels, curtains) in the motel room needed to be removed, the concrete sub-floor decontaminated, and other hard surfaces wiped down. Once that is completed and the right ambient temperature is attained, additional rounds of monitoring would be conducted to determine if removal and decontamination was effective.

2.1.2 Response Actions to Date

Dec. 11 - Three ERRS personnel arrived and after a safety orientation with COVID precautions, they commenced with removing all furniture, bedding, mattress/box springs, etc. Then all carpet and underlying pad material were removed and transferred to a lined 20-yard roll-off box for disposal. The furniture was staged on plastic in the parking lot, under a pop-up tent, and wiped down with decontamination solution. The room's concrete floor was sprayed with a mercury decontamination solution and then vacuumed with a mercury vacuum. Other hard surfaces in the room and bathroom were wiped down with a decontamination solution.

The room heater was turned on full force and three floor heaters were added to bring the temperature back up before another round of monitoring. Three floor surface locations were found to above 1000 ng/m³ and were spot decontaminated. Once the levels were determined to be below 1000 ng/m³, the furniture was returned to the room and overnight air sampling was started. Two air samplers were set up in the motel room with one air sampler in the bathroom with the bathroom door left open. The room heater was left on the highest setting.

Dec. 12 - The START returned in early morning, noted the room temperature to be 75 degrees fahrenheit, and measured ambient air and surfaces throughout the rooms. All readings were below 1000 ng/m³. The OSC deemed the room to be decontaminated. The OSC demobilized the ERRS so they could start their travel back over the pass to home before the next storm came in.

Air samplers were stopped and the samples collected for laboratory analyses. One final decontaminating wipe was done inside the mini-refrigerator. All assessment and removal equipment/supplies were removed and secured for demobilization. Once all was deemed secure, room keys were returned to the manager and START demobilized from the motel to check out of the hotel.

The OSC and the START started travel back to Seattle at 1100, after installing snow chains on the trailer being pulled by the Mobile Command Post.

2.1.3 Enforcement Activities, Identity of Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs)

The motel owner representative has been working closely with the OSC and has consulted with the owner's attorney. The OSC and Regional Counsel has collected the motel owner information for possible enforcement follow up.

The identity and whereabouts of the patient that caused the mercury release is unknown at this time due to privacy concerns and HIPAA regulations. The motel owner has requested the patient's information from the county sheriff's office and 911 center, for possible liability and cost recovery purposes.

2.1.4 Progress Metrics

<i>Waste Stream</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Manifest #</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Disposal</i>
Mercury-contaminated materials	Solid Waste	10 cubic yards	TBD	NA	Landfill

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2.2 Planning Section

2.2.1 Anticipated Activities

Roll-off box to be picked up and transported to disposal facility sometime during the week of December 14, 2020.

2.2.2 Issues

- COVID prevention concerns.
- Cold and snowy weather hampering cleanup activities and travel home.
- Inability to identify patient and discuss activities leading to potential contamination elsewhere prior to lodging in motel room.

2.3 Logistics Section

No information available at this time.

2.4 Finance Section

2.5 Other Command Staff

No information available at this time.

3. Participating Entities

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

4. Personnel On Site

EPA - 2 initially, then 1
START - 3 initially, then 2
ERRS - 3

5. Definition of Terms

No information available at this time.

6. Additional sources of information

7. Situational Reference Materials

No information available at this time.